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AUTHOR Lines, Patricia M.
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ABSTRACT

Increasing numbers of children are meeting state compulsory education requirements at home rather than at school. Although home instruction was once the mainstay of frontier American education, some educators now regard the practice as suspect. This paper hopes to reconcile opposing views by examining home schooling, including numbers of children, curricula, and some testing data. The report briefly reviews official responses to home instruction, with special attention to constitutional limits on state regulation, and suggests how public educators and home schoolers can cooperate. Home schoolers differ philosophically, but firmly agree that parents should be deeply involved in their children's education and development. The number of home schooled children has grown from about 15,000 in the early 1970s to between 120,000 and 260,000 children today. The movement may have peaked due to the enormous parental time commitment involved and the widening availability of Christian schools. The curricular packages examined show that home schools follow no standard pattern. Scattered testing data suggest that home schooling successes are more numerous than failures regarding both academic and social development. After reviewing state policies and court actions, the paper argues for increased cooperation between public officials and home schoolers to help identify rare cases of child abuse or neglect and enrich the database for child development and learning. Included are a list of interviewees, notes, 13 references, a list of cases, and an appendix describing home schooling in the Appalachia Educational Laboratory's region. (MLH)

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Home Instruction: An Overview

by

Patricia M. Lines
U. S. Department of Education

Policy and Planning Center
Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P. O. Box 1348
Charleston, West Virginia 25325

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Patricia Lines is a Seattle-based writer and attorney currently living in Washington, D. C., where she is a policy analyst with the U. S. Department of Education. This article was written by Ms. Lines in her private capacity. No official endorsement or support by the U. S. Department of Education is intended or should be inferred.

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INTRODUCTION

Tens of thousands--perhaps hundreds of thousands--of children are meeting state compulsory-education requirements at home rather than at school. Although home instruction was once the mainstay of frontier American education, some educators now regard such practices as not quite legitimate. Most often, they do not have a good general picture of home schooling. Some may be basing their views on sketchy information, or on one or two cases involving a poor program, or even child abuse. This paper attempts to fill the breach by providing an overview of this do-it-yourself practice (including a look at numbers, curricula, and some testing data). It briefly reviews official responses, with special attention to constitutional limits on state regulation. Finally, the paper makes some suggestions as to why and how public educators and home schoolers should end the all-too-often hostile relationship they presently maintain.

THE WORLD OF HOME SCHOOLING

An understanding of the home-schooling issue is aided by a review of the numbers of children involved, the curricula used in such efforts, and the academic achievement of home-schooled students.

Numbers of Children

The world of home schooling today is small but vigorous and diverse. Home schoolers appear to share at least one thing--a firm belief that parents can and should be deeply involved in the education

and development of their own children. Otherwise, reasons for undertaking home instruction are as varied as the families and the children involved. Some parents object to the political or cultural values they find in public and private schools. (Some are quite hostile.) Others do not like the instructional methods. Many agree with the late John Holt (author, educator, and home school advocate), that children learn best in an unstructured environment where the child sets the pace and direction. Many want to spend extended time with young children before putting them in school. Sometimes, recognizing the needs of a precocious child, a family decides that only a highly individualized program will permit that child to attain his or her highest potential. Others want to give special attention to a child who is having trouble adapting to school for other reasons. In the words of the women operating Learning at Home (a support organization located in Honaunau, Hawaii), some parents choose home instruction because they are "committed to providing a more informal, individualized, and responsive style of learning....These parents often birth their children at home, clothe them in natural fibers, feed them natural foods." Many parents undertake home instruction as a matter of long-standing religious tradition--Mormons (operating "kitchen schools" for two or three neighborhood children ages 5-7); Seventh-day Adventists (many of whom believe younger children should remain at home); the Amish (for children after grade eight who enter what might be described as work-study programs). Today, however, the largest growth appears to be among devout Christian parents (mostly Protestant) who might once have been comfortable with public schools, but are now unhappy with the secular nature of the public program and who have not located a suitable religious school.

The number of children in home instruction seems to have grown from around 15,000 in the early 1970s to well over 120,000 (and maybe as many as 260,000) children today. These estimates are based upon reports from organizations that supply curricular materials or support, supplemented by interviews[1] and questionnaires. In the early 1970s, only a handful of education institutions enrolled children in a home curriculum or provided curriculum packages designed for parents teaching their children at home (often abroad or in isolated areas). These included the Calvert School, Home Study International, International Institute, and the state of Alaska. An estimated 5,000-6,000 children in grades K-8 were enrolled or receiving curricular materials from these sources. Based on interviews with those familiar with the movement, and two questionnaires described in Table 1, it appears that 50-75 percent of all parents engaged in home schooling today design their own curriculum, rather than obtain services or materials from these institutions. Assuming that this was also true in the early 1970s, 10,000-15,000 children seems a reasonable guess for that period.

Reports from similar organizations today suggest that this number has grown by a factor of 10 or more. As shown in Table 1, which focuses on the easier-to-locate K-8 population[2], the original four now serve about 7,500 K-8 children. Some of the newcomers serve only a handful of children, but growth in distribution of Christian-based curricular packages has been extraordinary. In the aggregate, the organizations listed in the table claim almost 50,000 children in grades K-8. As noted, 50-75 percent (50,000-150,000) of all parents may be designing their own curricula without reliance on these curricular materials or

other services. Finally, it appears that another 20-30 percent of home-schooled children are in grades 9-12[3], bringing the total number of school-aged children to anywhere from 120,000 to 260,000[4].

Has this growth peaked? More efficient printing processes and the low cost of electronic media facilitate further expansion. Recent legislative changes (discussed below) make home instruction easier as a legal matter. Other powerful factors mitigate against much further growth, however. To begin, the burden parents undertake is enormous. Even for those who prefer to allow the child to remain self-directed, the time commitment generally requires a parent to forego employment and other major activities throughout the duration of the home instruction. Marie Della Bella, collecting data on home instruction for the state of Connecticut since 1983, has observed that only about half of the families registered in Connecticut continue for more than one year. An administrator with Accelerated Christian Education agrees with this estimate of short-term involvement. A second powerful factor is the widening availability of Christian schools; such schools are likely to attract some of the parents who turn to home instruction solely because of discomfort with the secular aspect of public schools. Finally, more and more parents of young children are entering the workforce and placing considerable pressure on institutions to offer preschool and after-school child care. On balance, the home schooling movement appears as a tiny countervailing trend. It seems unlikely that growth will continue at the rate demonstrated in recent years, absent major shifts in attitudes about parenting, careers, and the desirability of two incomes.

A closer look at these K-8 home programs reveals an astonishing variety of family characteristics, education approaches, and philosophy.

Very little systematically collected data exist to provide a complete picture, but there are some. For example, in 1984-85 the state of Washington conducted an experimental home-school program, at a time when home schooling was officially considered illegal. (State law required private school teachers to be certified, or in exceptional cases, to be supervised by a certified teacher.) Under these circumstances, the state was able to identify about 500 home-schooled students. Based on questionnaires from 313 "parent/tutors" teaching these 500 children, the state found that 89 percent of the parent/tutors were females; 74 percent were Caucasians; 14 percent were Hispanic; and a few were American Indian (5 parents), Black (4 parents), and Asian (1 parent). The largest number of families (85%) had incomes below $30,000. Four parents reported only a grade school education; 19 (6.1%) reported some high school education. Almost one quarter of the parents held a high school degree; a few more had a GED; 41 percent reported some college experience; 16 percent held a BA degree; 4 percent held graduate degrees. Most (89%) had three or fewer children. Almost all (95.8%) of the parents taught only their own children. Most taught just one or two children. Eight families (2.6%) reported four or more children in the home school. Three parents said they tutored other home-schooled children along with their own. Five said they tutored other children with assistance from their parents; nine said neighborhood children sometimes joined them on some projects. Most (56%) estimated that they spent from 20-30 hours per week in directed activities with their children; 24 percent spent over 30 hours; a few (6%), less than 15 hours; 13 percent, from 15-20 hours.

More limited interviews indicated that some parents--some of them former teachers--think through their methods very carefully to meet the

Table 1

K-8 Children In Home Instruction (1985-1986)

Abbott Loop Christian Center, Anchorage, AK	67
Accelerated Christian Education, Lewisville, TX	3,600*
Alpha Omega Publications, Tempe, AZ	2,700
American Christian Academy, Colleyville, TX	700
American Heritage Christian Academy, Sacramento, CA	150
Baldwin Park Christian School, Baldwin Park, CA	75
Calvert School, Baltimore, MD	4,168
Christian Liberty Academy, Arlington Heights, IL	21,000
Clonlara School, Ann Arbor, MI	1,560
Discovery Christian School, Concord, CA	240
Evangelistic & Faith Enterprises of America, Inc., Oliver Springs, TN	300
Family Centered Learning Alternatives, Arlington, WA	150
Hewitt-Moore Child Development Center, Washougal, WA	4,000
Home Study International, Takoma Park, MD	1,509
International Institute, Park Ridge, IL	1,000
Learning at Home, Honaunau, HI	800
Our Lady of Victory, Mission Hills, CA	600
National Academy of Christian Education, Columbus, OH	1,050
Pensacola Christian School, Pensacola, FL	1,870
Pilgrim Schools, Porterville & 3 other sites in CA	200
Pilgrim Christian School, Maywood, CA	80
Sante Fe Community School, CA	200
School of Home Learning, Escondido, CA	80
Seton School Home Study, Front Royal, VA	500
Summit Christian Academy, Dallas, TX	1,800
Sycamore Tree, Costa Mesa, CA	175
State Department of Alaska, Juneau, AK	800
14 organizations with 0 to 50 children in 1985-86	93
Subtotal	49,497
Estimate of number where parent prepares own curriculum**	50,000--150,000 100,000--200,000

Figures represent children enrolled in a school but remaining at home (often they correspond with a teacher) or receiving relatively complete curricular materials, support or services. Organizations were located through a mailing list compiled by Holt Associates (December 26, 1985), suplemented by the author's own research. Of 72 organizations identified, 6 were publishers serving both schools and home schools (home purchasers are accounted for in the last line of the table); 3 provided no data on numbers of children in their home-school programs; 1 had decided not to offer a home program; 6 were secondary or postsecondary only; 2 did not respond to a letter and were not "at home" when telephoned; and 14 did not answer a letter and had no telephone listing (and presumably do not serve large number of home schoolers).

*Of these, 1,800 are enrolled and 1,800 represent a rough estimate. ACE distributes 225,000 K-8 packets (54 are required for a full year) annually but has no record of how many go to home addresses. They also supply "tutorial centers" (six or more children; two or more families), which are not included here but classified as small private schools.

**In a Washington poll of 100 teachers supervising home instruction programs, 41 percent said parents/tutors "usually/always" selected curricular materials from a publisher, and 47 percent said they "never/sometimes" did so. The Home School Legal Defense Association randomly sampled 300 of its membership files (about 3,000 total): 72.33 percent of its members said they planned their own curriculum; 27.67 percent said they used a correspondence program. Note that parents in the sample of the membership in the Home School Legal Defense Association were substantially better educated than the parents represented in the Washington poll. This may indicate a relationship between willingness to design a curriculum and parental education.

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individual needs of their children. Others have less training, but they usually make an effort to discover the right pedagogical approach for their children, sometimes consulting teachers, experts, or materials on child development and learning. Some families use a very traditional approach, including schedules and lesson plans that look exactly like those used in group instruction. Other families abjure structure and strongly believe in allowing the child to set the pace and direction of the home study. Some families move from structured to unstructured programs as the child becomes more self-directed. Many families make an effort to arrange for some activities with other children and in the larger community. One home school, for example, makes regular trips to a home for the aged, where the children read to and assist the residents in a variety of ways. In several states, hundreds of families gather each summer for a "home-school jamboree."

Available Curricula

Examination of some of the curricular packages in use in home schools provides still another perspective on the world of home schooling. These materials reinforce the conclusion that home schools follow no standard pattern. The materials of the School of Home Learning, Escondido, California, display the motto, "Question Authority."- Fleming and Hunt (in press), describing the Packets on Accelerated Christian Education (PACE), find that contrary advice is implied in the PACE materials. One small California group relies almost exclusively on the World Book Encyclopedia, supplemented by activities and projects. The Calvert School, the oldest of the organizations

enrolling home-schooled children (starting experimentally in 1906, and officially in 1908), uses the same materials in its home program and on its Baltimore campus. They were first developed by the school's first head master, Virgil Hillyer, who adhered to such "radical" (for his day) ideas as teaching reading before teaching the alphabet, and learning without textbooks. Calvert now uses a comprehensive set of workbooks, supplemented with other readings, including a healthy dose of the classics. The materials may be purchased with or without the services of a correspondent teacher.

Alaska originally modeled its program after Calvert's but has added some significant modifications. The correspondence teachers, stationed in Juneau, personally visit their students from time to time and are in frequent telephone contact. (Alaska has a grant from the United States Department of Education to provide technical assistance to public or private institutions who wish to replicate its program, which serves both urban and rural areas.) Family Centered Learning Alternatives in Washington also maintains personal contact with a certified teacher, who assists in designing an individual program for each child, meets with each family at least once per week, advises the parent on his or her role as primary tutor, and helps arrange group activities for children from several families. Some organizations, such as the Clonlara School in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Learning at Home, in Honaunau, Hawaii, help parents develop an individualized curriculum using materials they develop, as well as texts and workbooks from schoolbook publishers. Hewitt-Moore Child Development Center and Evangelistic & Faith Enterprises of America both provide special assistance to families with learning disabled children.

The largest of the religious-based organizations appears to be the Christian Liberty Academy, which provides home schoolers with an individualized package of textbooks and workbooks. They initially used older textbooks, McGuffy Readers, and PACE. They no longer use PACE, and they now draw on a wider range of suppliers for their materials, in particular the purchase of books and materials from A Beka Publications (affiliated with the Pensacola Christian College), Bob Jones University Press, Rod and Staff Publishers (a Mennonite group), and a number of other publishers. Most of their families send tests and other materials to them for grading and evaluation. They employ teachers and other professionals for this task.

The PACE materials guide children through a sequential home-study curriculum that relies heavily on Biblical passages, moral homilies, and similar religious references. The materials consistently show two-parent families, and traditional sex roles for individuals. The materials show minority families in much the same light as majority families--the primary difference being shading of the skin in illustrations. The current criticism of PACE appears to focus mostly on the anti-Communist and authoritarian approach of the history and social studies packets.

One of the newcomers--the Pensacola Christian School--has pioneered a concept of video schools. It enrolls 70 students nationwide and provides televised classes along with other services. Most home schoolers regard the usefulness of television as limited.

Student Test Data

The above glimpses into the world of home schooling focus on "inputs." Perhaps the most important assessment of home instruction will

be based on "outputs"--the academic success or failure of the child. While some home-schooled children probably suffer from negligent or incompetent parent-teachers, others flourish. A recent example was the admission to Harvard University two years ago of a young man who had been taught entirely at home; his brother followed in 1986. A Florida youngster walked off with top individual honors in a Mathcounts competition in February 1986; the boy had been schooled at home until the sixth grade. These cases are only anecdotal, of course, but scattered testing data suggest that successes are more numerous than failures in home schools. Alaska, which has tested home-schooled children for years, finds them performing above average on nationally standardized tests. One study of children in a home tutorial network in Los Angeles showed that the children scored higher on standardized tests than did their peers in the Los Angeles public schools. In the experimental Washington state program, described above, the state tested 100 children (all those who remained in its experimental program from spring 1984 to spring 1985). While the sample was too small to premit generalized conclusions, a majority of the students were at or above average on the Stanford Achievement Test. Washington's parent survey, reviewed above, indicates that they were not an elite group; they seem representative of the newer home-schooling parent.

Testing data are scant, but more may be available soon. Testing is required in Arizona, Connecticut (if the local district requires it), Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia (if the local district requires it), Washington, and West Virginia. However, some of

these states, such as Arizona, Oregon, and Kentucky, rely on local districts to test and process data; the state itself does not collect the data. Arizona will score tests at the state level, but not everyone uses that service, and the state does not require its scoring contractors to aggregate data. Other states have not completed testing, or have not yet processed the data. When they do, a more complete picture may begin to emerge.

Even more scarce is evidence on social development of home-schooled children. What exists suggests superior development. John Wesley Taylor of Andrews University (Berrien Springs, Michigan) tested 224 home-schooled children randomly drawn from a list of 45,000 addresses supplied from Holt Associates and Hewitt-Moore Child Development Center. Using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, he found half of the tested home-schooled children in his sample scored at or above the 91st percentile. As he relied on parents to administer the test in response to mailed requests, his sample may contain disproportionately more affluent families. One might also look at "inputs" for social development. If group activity is the basis for such development, home schools can achieve it. There is evidence that most home-schooled children engage in frequent group activity.

Of course, high test scores provide no evidence that all children would benefit from the home experience. Della Bella reports that 90 percent of Connecticut children are at or above grade level when they start a program of home instruction. The test data are only evidence that children in home schools, on average, are having successful experiences.

OFFICIAL RESPONSES

Official responses to home instruction have come from state-level education policymakers and from the courts.

State Policies

States regulate home instruction through compulsory-education laws--laws designed approximately a century ago to address the problem of truancy. Often, they are criminal laws. Until recently several states did not recognize home instruction as a way of satisfying such laws, and in these states parents were prosecuted and sometimes jailed because they taught their children at home. By the end of 1986, however, every state permitted home instruction in some form. Only a few strictly regulate it--primarily Iowa, Michigan, and North Dakota, which require teachers to have certificates, and a handful of states that require a certified "tutor". (Results of a telephone survey of department of education officials in three of the four states served by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory are included as Appendix A.)

Different branches of state government have taken the initiative, often after intense lobbying or litigation. Twenty-nine state statutes now explicitly allow instruction at home by a parent or a tutor. Missouri adopted a new law in 1986; Arkansas, New Mexico, Tennessee, Washington, and Wyoming in 1985; Georgia and Virginia in 1984; and Wisconsin, West Virginia, Mississippi, Arizona, and Montana in 1983. In addition, several states have liberalized their laws. (For example, in 1985 Florida repealed a requirement that children taught a home be taught

only by state-certified tutors.) Another 13 state statutes (Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and South Carolina) mandate that the child be educated without specifying where, or they require either school attendance or some non-school alternative, such as "equivalent instruction." Courts in Maryland and Indiana have recently held that phrases such as "equivalent instruction" authorize home instruction. Nine state statutes require school attendance with no exception. However, Illinois and North Carolina recognize home instruction by virtue of court decisions determining that the requirement of "school" attendance in their statutes is satisfied by attendance at a "home school." Michigan's attorney general and state boards of education in Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and New Hampshire have also decided that the home can be a school. The Texas board, the last holdout, adopted new guidelines this past summer as part of an effort to settle a lawsuit.

Court Actions

While state policy has moved consistently in the direction of more relaxed regulation, judicial treatment of home instruction varies considerably. In the past few years, courts in Alabama, North Carolina, North Dakota, and West Virginia have upheld state requirements that greatly restrict home instruction or effectively prohibit it. State supreme courts in Arkansas and Kansas ruled that compulsory-attendance laws in effect at the time required school attendance. Their rulings refused to find that home schools could satisfy that requirement. In all

these states the legislatures responded by recognizing home schooling in some way, although the degree of regulation varied.

In contrast, several other courts have struck down compulsory-education laws because they were too vague or overbroad. The chief problem was a failure to define "school" or (in the case of Iowa), "equivalent instruction." Courts generally disfavor statutes that might give administrators authority to regulate free speech or other innocent activities. Such legislation might discourage cautious people from exercising their first amendment rights, and it may fail to put individuals on notice as to what is prohibited. Thus, courts in Georgia, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Missouri have thrown out all or part of those states' compulsory-education laws. All but two of these states have since passed new laws that specifically permit home instruction. Iowa has not acted. Minnesota has a new law authorizing a study of the issue.

Faced with similar definitional problems, the Illinois Supreme Court decided that the home can be a "school" and, thus, made home instruction legal in Illinois. The North Carolina Supreme Court recently took the same view. An Indiana Federal Court this year decided that "equivalent instruction" included home instruction.

Although the Supreme Court has not reviewed the right to home schooling, cases involving the free exercise of speech and religion and a handful of related school cases suggest that constitutional interests are at stake. Generally, when a first amendment interest can be found, the court weighs the interest of the state against the individual family's freedom to determine a child's education. The Supreme Court decision in

Wisconsin v. Yoder (finding compulsory-attendance requirements for children after grade 8 violate the first amendment rights of the Amish) is, in many ways, a home-schooling case. Although the court ruled narrowly in Yoder, prior decisions dealing with conscientious objectors to military service indicate a willingness to extend freedom of religion to those motivated not by religion, but by conscience. Many legal scholars now believe that the family interest should prevail in the matter of home schooling and the state's interest can be met in other ways. As summarized by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) policy on this matter:

> ...in the interest of parental right to choose an alternative to public education, [home instruction with safeguards, such as approval of curriculum or testing of the child]...should be extended to all jurisdictions because the state's interest in assuring minimum levels of education does not extend to control of the means by which that interest is realized.

A new wave of cases is on the horizon, testing not whether home schooling should be permitted, but the extent to which states may regulate it. The teacher certification requirement is currently undergoing litigation in the three states that require it. It seems likely that there will be future litigation concerning the state's authority to regulate the content of the curriculum as well. While Fleming and Hunt's (in press) critical article does not recommend a public response, it may nonetheless inspire efforts to regulate curricular materials. Anxious educators may want to prescribe specific texts for children in private schools and home schools, or require submission of private texts for approval. There would, of course, be severe problems under the free speech clause of the first amendment if state officials attempted either of these approaches.

The Supreme Court has indicated that states have legitimate concern for the education of the child and may specify reasonable regulations, including a minimum curriculum. But the court has never extended this dictim to give a state control over selection of specific materials or the authority to prescribe every subject to be taught. Indeed, states have not prevailed when they have intruded too far into this realm. It is difficult to envision the court approving a state-mandated text for private schools, including home schools, when it has refused to require public school children to salute the flag. It is also important that the court decided the flag salute case on free speech grounds, although the free exercise of religion might have provided alternative grounds, given the religiously motivated protests of the families in that case. Similarly, requiring a private school to submit its textbook selections for state review assumes state power to censor the materials. If something in the materials prevents approval, then the practical solution is to take it out. This, too, raises severe constitutional problems. In the 1920s the Supreme Court struck down a Hawaii law that excessively regulated foreign language schools, including their textbooks (Farrington v. Tokushiga), and a Nebraska law that prohibited instruction in a foreign language (Meyer v. Nebraska). Regulating the content of private school materials is simply too intrusive under the free speech clause of the first amendment.

The court will allow regulation of narrowly and precisely defined categories of verbal utterances. This could include defamation, pornography, espionage, incitement to violence, advocating the overthrow of the government, or yelling "fire" in a crowded theater. Courts do not

regard such utterances as "speech" to be protected under the first amendment. However, PACE--in the view of some public educators among the most objectionable of the privately generated materials on the market--appears to be full of the stuff that is protected not only under the free speech clause but also by the guarantee of free exercise of religion.

But this does not resolve the constitutional issue. States may regulate free speech, if there is a "compelling state interest" sufficient to overcome first amendment rights. Ever since Justice Hugo Black lost his battle to persuade his brethren that the right to free speech was absolute, the court has allowed some limits on free speech in the face of overwhelming societal need. Accompanying this rule, however, is a rule that the state pursue "the least drastic means" to achieve its legitimate goal. It seems unlikely that the state's interest in the child is so compelling that it would ever justify a state-prescribed view of history, social studies, or the world. (Geometry might present a different problem, of course.) Even if parents and teachers were enticing children into totalitarian beliefs, this particular constitutional rule would require states to search for less drastic means to stop them. Prescribing or censoring textbooks would be a particularly ironic method of preserving democratic ideals.

In any case, the fuss over PACE seems to hinge on political and cultural differences. Some public educators will easily accept home schooling in geographically isolated areas or abroad; this has gone on for years. But they grow nervous when home schooling is motivated by politics and religious fundamentalism. Fleming and Hunt (in press) do not

criticize PACE for poor grammar, spelling errors, lack of sequential progression, or evidence that children fail to learn from these materials. To the contrary, scattered evidence, some of which is cited by Ronald E. Johnson (in press) in his response to Fleming and Hunt, suggests that the children using PACE packets test above national norms. The negative judgment rests on the view of the world depicted in the materials.

To be sure, PACE is politically conservative, authoritarian, and pervasively Christian. In contrast, public school materials tend to be progressive, secular, and (according to a bevy of recent studies) almost totally silent in their treatment of religion, especially the majority religion. Both contain some factual errors. The Hunt and Johnson critique of PACE sounds oddly familiar to anyone who has reviewed recent critiques of public school materials, initiated by political conservatives, such as Paul Vitz and the Heritage Foundation, who, it may be noted, have won agreement on some points from their political opponents, such as the Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the People for the American Way. Hunt and Flemming's ultimate condemnation of PACE--failure to stimulate critical thinking--is the same criticism of public school history texts offered by Frances FitzGerald in her witty and troubling book, America Revised. In one way, PACE surpasses public school texts: it tackles topics from recent history that public school texts avoid because they are controversial[5]. As FitzGerald observed, where a topic provokes too much disagreement, it fails to survive the official and unofficial reviews that leave public texts bland, dull, and strangely silent in certain areas.

Courts will uphold reasonable state regulations, of course. Although, once again, there is no precedent at the Supreme Court level, states no doubt have the authority to request data from home schools. There may also be some minimal standards for the school day and school year, and perhaps some additional requirements. As the ACLU policy suggests, many states choose to test children. In the alternative, states could prescribe reasonable standards for the teacher--testing, or a high school degree to teach young children, and a college degree for older children, for example, assuming that the state has evidence that these things affect the child's learning. It is not at all clear that states could show a sufficiently important justification for a requirement for a teacher's certificate, which, if it is meaningful at all, seems none too relevant in a one-to-one teaching relationship. Likewise, it seems doubtful that the state could require both testing of the child and the teacher as criteria for acceptance of the program. This is not required of public schools. That is, the public school is not shut down if the children or teachers fail to test above a minimum standard. The most flexible approach would permit several different options by which home instruction could receive approval. For example, state board approval may offer a more impartial review, especially where a local district is small and may fear loss of per pupil state aid. On the other hand, local district officials are usually more accessible and better able to monitor home programs. It would be consistent to make the state option more rigorous (requiring, perhaps a college degree or a test for parents) to compensate for the lack of easy communication between home and school.

BUILDING COOPERATIVE PUBLIC SCHOOL-HOME RELATIONSHIPS

Much could be gained by cooperative relationships between public officials and home schoolers. Better ties would facilitate answers to questions about numbers and may help identify the rare case of child abuse or neglect. More important still, cooperative ties would enrich the database for research on child development and learning, since some home schools provide a substantially different learning environment. This enables comparisons of one-to-one and larger teaching ratios; effects of peer pressure; differences in contacts with adults generally and the effects of such contacts; the efficacy of relatively untrained parents and other tutors and trained, certified teachers; child-directed and teacher-directed programs; and similar differences. Particularly for those families that have adopted the views of the late John Holt or Raymond Moore, both of whom have argued forcefully for less structure and greater reliance on child-directed activities, such studies could help inform efforts to understand early childhood development and could lead to better programs for this age group.

Unfortunately, sometimes home schoolers see public educators as crass opportunists interested in their children for the sake of federal and state dollars--or worse, depraved characters seeking to mold other people's children in all the wrong ways. Some act on these more paranoid instincts and refuse to cooperate with the most innocuous requests for information. Others carry their preference for parent-led programs so far that they refuse professional supervision even where it is required for

objectivity, such as in administration of tests. Some state officials are distressed by the insistence of some home schoolers that parents themselves administer required standardized tests.

On the other side of the coin, some public educators seem to feel that only public schools can achieve public goals, and find home schools even more subversive than private schools. A few state and local education professionals vigorously oppose home schooling, because they believe it is unsound educationally and even dismiss evidence of above-average academic achievement as incomplete. Some educators have more generalized worries about accountability, perhaps confusing the idea of accountability to parents with accountability to the general public. (While both are important, general accountability is based on averages, a criteria on which home schools seem to be succeeding.) Some public educators cite isolated cases involving child abuse, apparently assuming that these are typical for home instruction and could be prevented by school enrollment. For all these educators, better data collection and more contact with home schoolers should help resolve their objections.

In some ways, public educators have only two choices: (1) no contact with the home school movement, which would suit some home schoolers, or (2) contacts built upon a concerted effort to establish mutual trust, friendship, and respect. Aside from the constitutional difficulties discussed above, regulating the intellectual fare parents give their children is quite difficult. Even in the recent past when states viewed home instruction as illegal, most failed to enforce their own laws. Often parents went underground or moved to a more favorable state. Sometimes, as recently happened in Washington state, prosecutors refused to take the cases.

Public educators must now also deal with the increased numbers and growing political sophistication of home schoolers. Well over a thousand home schoolers and their supporters attended a recent meeting of the Texas Board of Education to review proposed regulations, even though at the time the board regarded the parents' choice as illegal. Lobbying efforts before state legislatures in other states have succeeded. A loose nationwide network of home schoolers has formed, aided by the efforts of Holt Associates and other organizations that compile mailing lists of home schoolers and supportive organizations. Some of the support organizations have become highly skilled in public procedures. For example, the Home School Legal Defense Association, which presently serves about 3,000 families for an annual fee of $100, undertakes to represent parents for no additional charge if they face legal action due to their home-schooling efforts. The organization also provides legal materials, maintains an up-to-date compilation of state policies, and will provide testimony before state legislatures.

All of this means legal and political difficulties for states that strictly regulate home instruction. A more realistic approach would be recognition of home schooling, accompanied by professional efforts to build bridges to the home schoolers, to increase reporting, and to provide assistance where a child may require it. Given a more favorable legal and political environment, it becomes possible to work on establishment of positive public-private relationships.

Responsible parties in both the public and private sectors have recognized how hostile attitudes can undermine broader social goals, and some have taken steps to overcome this. For example, Learning at Home, a

nationwide supplier of materials and a support group for Hawaiian home schoolers, distributes a two-page information sheet that walks a parent through the steps required to conform to Hawaii law. Half of the advice is of the following sort:

> Please remember when you deal with school officials that, to them, you represent homeschoolers. If you approach them respectfully and with confidence...they will be reassured that you are going to be a responsible parent and take care of your child's education....We have found that any sensible educational plan presented with confidence and civility to local principals is eventually accepted if those official procedures are followed.

Such admonitions to home schoolers, when followed, would greatly help the development of friendly, cooperative relationships.

The greater burden of building bridges probably should fall on public officials, however. They are, after all, the professionals in the partnership. Where large numbers of home-schooling families appear hostile, public educators might organize a series of nonthreatening meetings held in neutral settings. Intermediaries--legislators, private school leaders, academicians--might facilitate initial contacts. The first meetings should focus on topics where agreement is possible, such as "Our Goals for Our Children." No one should expect too much from these initial meetings other than a willingness to communicate. (This approach has been utilized by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Private Education, which sponsors "Koffee Klatches" for public and private school officials. Charles O'Malley, director of the office, has observed that at the first of these, "It was Thursday, and we had coffee and doughnuts. When the meeting concluded, everyone could agree that it was Thursday, and that we had coffee and doughnuts.") But as the

participants in such discussions become more willing to engage in discussion and as understanding builds, the agenda may turn to issues of cooperation.

Ideally, public officials and home schoolers can make a peace that permits cooperation on the real business at hand--educating children. At minimum, local school officials could and probably should open school facilities to home schoolers--libraries, athletic facilities, laboratories, testing services. They could and should admit home-schooled children to individual classes, especially choir, band, and similar classes where group instruction is essential. Even now, a number of state and local education agencies permit, and even encourage, part-time enrollment. (In Washington, where the state department has just begun to compile data on such matters, 64 of 1,509 home schoolers requested part-time courses when they registered their program.) Significantly, local districts are able to include these children in attendance reports used to calculate state aid. Enterprising private schools might also consider part-time enrollment options for home schoolers.

Individual leadership plays a key role. For example, a superintendent in Washington offered to assist parents engaged in home instruction, at a time when state law forbade it, by enrolling them in school and providing support and materials for the home program. He managed to keep well-informed on the progress of children in these programs, he gained high credibility with parents, and incidentally, kept his state aid. In a second example, Calvin M. Frazier, commissioner of education for Colorado, agreed to participate in a series of meetings

with attorneys and legislators, and through such talks successfully settled 10 law suits between his state and home schoolers. Not stopping there, when he heard that some parents were truly fearful of him, he invited them for coffee. By being accessible and understanding, he overcame their reluctance to file the formal reports required in his state. To his surprise, he discovered that all the parents wanted him to do was agree in principle that they had a consitutional right to engage in home instruction. Out of this informal meeting, Frazier organized a state-level advisory committee on home instruction (perhaps the only one in the 50 states), by recruiting members from among the parents who joined him for coffee.

By extending a helping hand, public officials are able to gather more information on home programs. More importantly, they are able to help their states tap the dedication and idealism of individuals--a great reservoir of energy--and channel it into educational efforts. The result will probably be children who are educated to be different, but such differences can ultimately stimulate the intellectual development of a nation.

NOTES

[1]As is the case for much of the information gathered for this article, corroborating information and estimates were gathered through informal interviews, information gathered at conferences, and correspondence taking place over the past two years. While over 200 such contacts took place, with (at last count) 103 individuals, the following were especially helpful:

Marie Della Bella, director, Private Education, Connecticut Department of Education;

Merrill Hall, head master, and other faculty at the Calvert School, Baltimore, Maryland;

Sylvia Hare, Abilities Research Associates, Morongo Valley, California;

Michael Farris and Chris Klicka, Home School Legal Defense Assocation;

Barbara Lawson, Windsong Life School, Anaheim, California;

Dick Luther, director, Home Correspondence Division, State of Alaska;

Michael J. McHugh, Christian Liberty Academy, Arlington Heights, Illinois;

Barbara Mertens, director, Private Education, Washington State Office of Public Instruction;

Pat Montgomery, head mistress, Clonlara School, Ann Arbor, Michigan;

Raymond and Dorothy Moore, Hewitt-Moore Child Development Center, Washougal, Washington;

James Pritchard, Accelerated Christian Education, Lewisville, Texas;

Steve Stephens, state testing coordinator, Arizona Department of Education;

Ted Wade, Gazelle Publications, Auburn, California;

Arlon Widder, American Christian Schools, Colleyville, Texas;

Darlene Wicks, education administrator, Centralized Correspondence Study, Alaska Department of Education.

[2]This inquiry focuses on K-12 because high school correspondence courses reach adults as well as school-aged children, confounding the estimate.

[3]Some of the organizations in the table on page 6 serve school-aged children through the twelfth grade and do not normally serve adults. Accelerated Christian Education believes that 40 percent of its users are in grades 9-12. School of Home Learning has 22 out of 102 children in grades 9-12. The Pensacola Christian School estimates 20-25 percent of its correspondence students in grades 9-12. Alaska has 1,254 school-aged students in K-12; 456 (over 1/3) are in 9-12 (1985-86 data).

[4]This method was chosen as inexpensive, but likely to have some validity. Many factors could distort the estimate. I have no doubt failed to identify all sources of curricular materials or support. I suspect two of the organizations reporting no children had some, but were fearful of reporting it. The estimate of numbers of parents designing their own curriculum is based on limited data. The numbers of those relying on organizational packages, rather than correspondent services, may be missing another 10,000 to 20,000 children who use photocopied materials or "hand-me-downs" from an older sibling or neighbor. (Most home-schooling families have more than one child involved.) The 800 reported by Alaska does not include families obtaining assistance from local school districts. Many home schoolers may enroll at a local Christian school and obtain the PACE or Christian Liberty Academy materials directly. Some of the organizations listed enroll or send materials to a substantial number of addresses outside the country, some of which may not represent American children. All things considered, the estimate is probably understated, but hopefully it can serve as a preliminary guide to public policymakers and to the research community.

There are, of course, alternative ways to make the estimate, but they seemed too expensive or too unreliable. Reports from state departments of education would likely understate the extent of the practice. Public officials in many states considered home schooling illegal until recently, and many home schoolers still distrust public authorities. Where states have data, they may be used to corroborate the general estimate. For example, the state department in Arizona reports 900 children in home instruction; Connecticut, 120; Georgia, 1,500; and Washington, 1,500 (with 75% of local school districts reporting). But extrapolating from one state estimate can be misleading. Judging from the number of home-schooling networks and other home-schooling organizations in both California and Texas, for example, those states may have above average activity.

Census figures appear useless. First, the growth in home schooling makes 1980 Census figures unreliable for 1985-86. Second, the official census survey asks only if a child attends public or private school. Some home schoolers may have responded "private" and some "none," and it is difficult to separate these from truants. Based on a fall 1984 survey, the Bureau of Census estimates that 545,000 children ages 5-13

are not enrolled in preschool or school. This figure is vulnerable to sampling errors, and it says little about whether the children are in any kind of conscious education program.

Dr. Raymond Moore of the Hewitt-Moore Child Development Center estimates the numbers at around 1 million, relying primarily on membership of home-schooling associations and attendance at meetings. He does not adjust for duplication or for proportions of participants not actively home schooling. (Dr. Wesley Taylor, who sent a questionnaire to a random sample of the 45,000 addresses in the Holt Associates and Hewitt-Moore lists, estimates that only half are actively home schooling a child.) Dr. Moore also includes in his estimate a very rough guess that "five to ten percent" of both the total handicapped and total migrant population are in home schooling. This could increase the estimate by 225,000 to 550,000, assuming that this group obtains materials or support from organizations that are not accounted for in Table 1.

A more thorough analysis following Dr. Moore's method would be costly. Given sufficient funds, one could produce a sizeable master list, combining names from the networks (Holt identifies at least one home-schooling association in every state except South Carolina); and eliminate duplicates or use a sample questionnaire to estimate overlap. Supplemental, intensive field research could help determine how many home schoolers remain unaffiliated.

[5]This observation should not be construed as the author's endorsement of the materials as a whole. She only wishes to point out that there is some value, even to public educators, in examining what PACE does. Hopefully, with the Bicentennial of the Constitution so close at hand, the debate over PACE will take place with sensitivity and with fairness, and disagreements over history and politics will be kept in perspective.

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Appendix A

HOME SCHOOLING IN THE APPALACHIA EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY'S REGION

Home schooling is instruction of children, at home, by their natural parents or guardians. The term does not refer to private or church schooling or to instruction by private tutors. A telephone survey of state department of education personnel in AEL member states reveals current state practices regarding home schooling.

Tennessee

Department of education officials report that Tennessee enacted a home schooling law in May 1985. The law outlines stipulations under which parents or guardians can teach their children at home. Enactment of the law was precipitated by two lawsuits brought by parents seeking to teach their children at home. The courts in these cases found that the definition of the term "private school" was too vague in the Tennessee school law.

Under the new Tennessee law, parents are required to notify the district superintendent of their intent to educate their children at home. Notification must take place before August 1 of the year in which home instruction is to be implemented. Parents who wish to educate their children at home must present evidence of their own level of education. To instruct children in grades K-8, parents must have graduated from high school or have been awarded the GED. To instruct students in grades 9-12, parents must have been awarded a bachelors degree from an institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the state board of education. Parents have the right to appeal to the commissioner for an exemption of this requirement. As yet, no exemptions have been granted, though exemptions have been requested.

Instruction at home must take place for 4 hours per day, 180 days per year. No curriculum has been established for home schooling at the K-8 level. At the 9-12 level, parents must indicate to the district superintendent whether they intend to follow a general curriculum or a college preparatory curriculum. If they elect the former curriculum, they must teach all subjects required by the state board of education in that curriculum. If they elect the latter curriculum, they must teach all subjects required for entry to Tennessee's 4-year public institutions of higher education.

The Tennessee law also provides for yearly testing of students by the commissioner of education. Testing is carried out under auspices of the commissioner in the school that the children would normally attend. Special provisions of the law address the issue of what is to be done in the case of students who score below the norm. In the extreme case (a student who scores one or more grade levels below the norm for two consecutive years), the superintendent has the right (not the obligation) to require that, at the parents' option, the child attend either a public, a church-sponsored, or a private school.

In 1985, 357 home schools were established under Tennessee's home schooling law. A total of 538 students received instruction at home. This year, 366 home schools have been registered under the law. They serve 589 students.

State department staff provides parents with information about two facts: First, students who reenter the public school system must be tested under local school district procedures to determine their grade placement. Second, no provisions for the award of a high school diploma exist for students completing grade 12 at home.

Virginia

Virginia Department of Education staff reports that the state board of education has endorsed home schooling as a legitimate option. In Virginia, parents who wish to educate their children at home must receive permission from the local school division, which also bears the burden for monitoring. Parents may appeal the school division's decision to the state department.

Virginia also has adopted regulations about correspondence course curricula that can be used for home instruction. About 14 such curricula exist, according to state department officials. In addition to these regulations, administrative guidelines, addressed to division superintendents as memos, have been issued. These guidelines are not binding on the local division. Attorney General's opinions have also been issued to clarify issues in individual cases.

West Virginia

The West Virginia Department of Education reports that provisions for home schooling occur as exemptions to the state's compulsory-attendance law. Most home-schooling arrangements are currently authorized under exemption K of the school law, although another section of the law, exemption B, is explicitly designed as the exemption governing home schooling. Local school districts in West Virginia are free to develop their own guidelines for the approval of home schools under exemption B. Some local districts have done so, though many have not.

Exemption K was intended to provide for the establishment of new church schools. It does not require the approval of the local district, whereas exemption B does require such approval. Exemption K does require standardized

testing of students enrolled in exemption-K schools (in this case, at home), but the law fails to specify the circumstances under which such testing is to be accomplished, including what kinds of tests are to be given or what kinds of scores are to be reported. Though the state department has announced that it intends to stop applying exemption K to home schools, litigation brought by home-school parents seeks to restrain the state from taking this action. New legislation may be necessary to resolve the issue satisfactorily. At present, the state has registered 276 exemption-K schools. State officials estimate that about 80% of these schools represent instruction in the home.